



## CATAWBA COUNTY

P.O. Box 389 100-A South West Boulevard Newton, North Carolina 28658-0389  
[www.catawbacountync.gov](http://www.catawbacountync.gov)

Telephone: 828-465-8201  
Fax: 828-465-8392

### EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES VETERAN NAMED COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

An Emergency Services veteran who has steadily risen in positions of responsibility from paramedic to Training Officer to Manager of Emergency Medical Services in Catawba County has been named the County's Emergency Services Director. Bryan Blanton will now permanently supervise all of Catawba County's emergency services, including Emergency Medical Services, Fire and Rescue Services, Emergency Management, Animal Services and Veterans Services.

Blanton succeeds David Weldon, who left Catawba County Government in January 2010 to begin new duties as area coordinator for the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management in eight eastern North Carolina counties.



"We are excited to have Bryan as the new Emergency Services Director for Catawba County," said Lee Worsley, Assistant County Manager. "The interview process was extensive as we received 30 applications. The interview process included a number of stakeholders who are critical to the success of the Emergency Services Department. These stakeholders served on interview panels that included the executive management team, Catawba County department heads, division heads from Emergency Services, and a community partner group that included a fire chief, rescue chief, and a representative from State Emergency Management and the Catawba County Humane Society."

Bryan Blanton, a native of Casar in nearby Cleveland County, began his work in fire and rescue services in his home region. He worked with the Cleveland County Emergency Medical Service as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and was then employed by Lincoln County Hospital EMS as a Paramedic Crew Chief. Prior to beginning his work in Catawba County, he also volunteered with the Casar Volunteer Fire Department and Upper Cleveland Rescue Squad.

Blanton started work for Catawba County in 1993 as a part time EMT-Paramedic. He later began working with Catawba County EMS full time, was promoted to serve as Training Officer in 2000, and served in that capacity until he was named Emergency Medical Services Manager in February 2003. Following Weldon's move to the State Division of Emergency Management in early 2010, Blanton was named Interim Emergency Services Director.

"Bryan has distinguished himself throughout his career in Catawba County," Worsley added. "His management of Catawba County's EMS system has been recognized statewide as Catawba County EMS is routinely referred to as a leader in the state. Over the last several years, Bryan has taken on additional roles in the area of emergency management and hazardous materials response. Over the last two months, Bryan has served as the Interim Emergency Services Director and has done an outstanding job. Bryan is known throughout our organization, and the community, as a person who deeply cares about his work, employees and members of the community. Bryan's deep commitment to his work and his compassion for others is evident in the way he leads. Having someone with that compassion and energy in the position of Emergency Services Director is extremely important, especially since this person will be called upon to lead response and recovery efforts when Catawba County faces disaster or emergency situations. I look

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forward to working with Bryan and with our community response partners as Bryan begins leading the Department.”

As Catawba County's Emergency Services Director, Blanton will be responsible for day-to-day supervision of the County Emergency Medical Services, Fire/Rescue Services, Emergency Management, Animal Services and Veterans Services. He will supervise a full-time staff of 102 which worked under a 2009-2010 budget totaling \$9,002,567.

Blanton says he decided to seek the Emergency Services Director's position to continue a lifelong goal of public service.

“I have worked hard all my life with a single goal in mind - helping people,” Blanton said. “With that in mind, I decided to apply for this position because it will provide me an opportunity to continue helping people and empower others to help people as well. I believe we have an excellent staff and provide quality service. My hope is to build on what we have, to strengthen the team and provide even better service to the citizens.”

The County has an excellent group of employees who desire to provide quality service to the citizens of Catawba County,” Blanton continued. “This is evident on a daily basis within each of Emergency Services' five divisions: Animal Services, Veterans Services, Emergency Medical Services, Fire and Rescue, and Emergency Management. Additionally, the county is blessed to have a dedicated group of paid and volunteer first responders who provide fire protection, medical first response, rescue services, law enforcement, 911 telecommunications and more.”

Blanton is a graduate of Burns High School in Cleveland County. He earned an Associate of Science Degree in Emergency Medical Service from the American College of Prehospital Medicine and also holds the Management Institute for EMS Certificate from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and a Critical Care Paramedic Certificate from the University of Iowa. Earlier in his career, he obtained the North Carolina EMT-Paramedic Certificate and the North Carolina Firefighter I Certificate from Cleveland Community College.

Blanton has passed on his knowledge to future generations by teaching EMS and Emergency Management classes for numerous community colleges across North Carolina since the mid 1990s. He said his initial work will focus on building on the existing strengths of the County's team.

“I'll work to develop and strengthen relationships with our stakeholders, such as the American Red Cross, County departments, fire and rescue departments, the county's fire and rescue associations, our hospitals and the Humane Society, to name a few. We will be evaluating all the services we provide to ensure we're offering the services citizens expect and deserve, in a timely and financially responsible manner. An Emergency Services Strategic Plan was developed several years ago and has provided the department with direction for almost ten years now. I believe it is time to re-evaluate the situation and develop a new strategic plan for the future.”

Blanton and his wife, Kirsten, who serves as a Homecare Social Worker with the Palliative CareCenter and Hospice of Catawba Valley, live in the Mountain View area. He is an active member of Friendship United Methodist Church and, in his time away from duties, enjoys running and golf.